

Examining the Relationship Between Job Stress and Employee Turnover Intention

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Received: 12 04, 2024 | Accepted: 12 05, 2024 | Published: 12 06, 2024

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complex relationship between job stress and turnover intention, highlighting the mixed findings in existing literature. While some research indicates a direct correlation between job stress and increased turnover intentions, other studies suggest that job stress may not always be the primary factor influencing an employee's decision to leave. This paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the conditions under which job stress leads to turnover, emphasizing the role of mediating and moderating factors such as organizational support and job satisfaction. Utilizing a library research methodology, the study systematically reviews existing literature and secondary data to identify key themes and insights. The findings underscore the necessity for organizations to implement effective strategies to support employee mental health and mitigate the adverse effects of job stress, ultimately fostering a more stable and productive workforce.

Keywords: Job Stress; Employee; Relationship; Organization; Turnover Intention.

How to Cite:

Ramadhanty, N. (2024). Examining the Relationship Between Job Stress and Employee Turnover Intention. *PENG: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Manajemen*, 2(1b), 1626-1632. <https://doi.org/10.62710/xv063951>

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, job stress has become a major concern among global researchers and practitioners due to its significant impact on organizations. According to World Health Organization (2024), there are 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety. This condition not only affects individuals but also threatens the overall stability and continuity of companies by increasing turnover intention risks. In fact, 71% of employees experiencing tension and stress at work are three times more inclined to look for job opportunities elsewhere (American Psychological Association, 2021). This data indicates that a high-pressure work environment can trigger the employee's desire to switch jobs and potentially increase turnover intention rates.

However, not every organization is aware and cares about the mental well-being of their employees and the levels of stress experienced in the workplace. Many employees face high levels of stress and mental health challenges, often without sufficient support from their employers. A study by Deloitte in 2021 revealed that in the United Kingdom, 44% of employees do not feel supported by their organizations when it comes to mental health, highlighting a significant gap in employer empathy and resources for well-being. In the United States, the American Psychological Association reported in 2023 that 43% of employees are still hesitant to disclose mental health concerns to their employers, fearing that it could risk their career progression. In Japan, the consequences of overlooking mental well-being in the workplace are particularly severe. In 2019, there were 1,949 reported cases of work-related deaths and suicide attempts, according to researcher Julia Engelmann (2020).

The relationship between job stress and turnover intention has been extensively studied, but existing research reveals some inconsistencies and certain gaps that require further exploration. Many studies indicate job stress is the major contributor to turnover. For example, a study by Audina Vika (2018) carried out hypothesis testing and proved that job stress has a positive and significant effect on employee turnover intention. Supported by another study by Elfenso and Andani (2022), they stated if employee feel stressed about their work, then there will be a high desire for them to leave the job.

However, other research suggests that job stress may not always be the primary factor influencing turnover. For instance, a study by Syahrial and Sari (2023) concluded that job stress does not have a significant effect on turnover intention. Another study by Rahmawati and Widyanoro (2023) noted that based on their research, the relationship between job stress and turnover intention is negative.

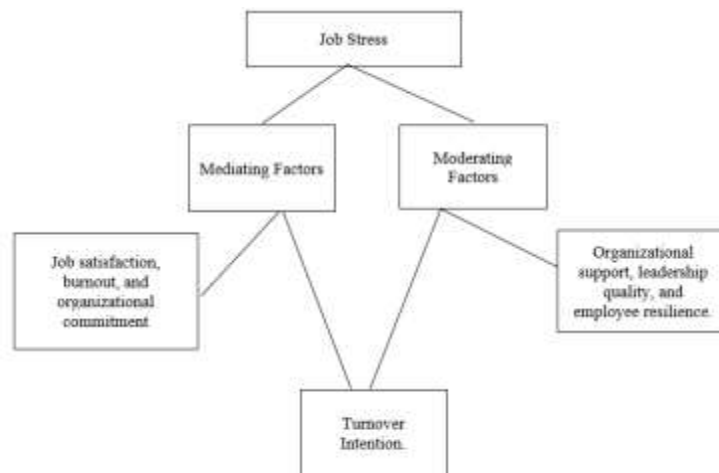
Considering the mixed findings results in the existing literature, the purpose of this study is to further investigate the relationship between job stress and turnover intention, with a focus on identifying the key factors that mediate or moderate this relationship. This study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which job stress leads to turnover, and how organizations can better support their employees to mitigate the negative effects of stress.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This article utilizes the library research method for its data collection process. As defined by Mary W. George (2008), library research involves systematically collecting, managing, and using information resources obtained from libraries or digital databases to achieve specific research objectives or resolve particular issues. Library research emphasizes a structured approach where researchers critically engage with diverse sources, such as books, academic journals, reports, and other credible materials.

Library research is closely associated with secondary data collection, involving data not collected directly by researchers through primary methods but through previously documented works and studies by others. Secondary data from various sources offers a crucial theoretical and empirical basis for explaining phenomena or issues being studied (Kumar, 2011). In this process, researchers carefully select and assess available data to ensure that only the most valid, relevant, and up to date information is used in analysis.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL



The conceptual model in this study explains the relationship between job stress and turnover intention, with the roles of mediating factors and moderating factors. Mediating factors, such as job satisfaction, burnout, and organizational commitment, bridge the impact of job stress on turnover intention, where increased job stress can decrease satisfaction and commitment while increasing burnout. Meanwhile, moderating factors, such as organizational support, leadership quality, and employee resilience, help mitigate the negative effects of job stress by providing support, effective leadership, and employee resilience. This model highlights the importance of managing job stress through mediation and moderation approaches to prevent turnover intention.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship Between Job Stress and Employee Turnover Intention

The relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention is a multifaceted issue that has garnered significant attention from organizational researchers and practitioners. Job stress occurs when the demands of the workplace surpass an individual's ability to cope effectively, leading to a range of negative psychological, emotional, and physical outcomes. These outcomes, including burnout, anxiety, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished organizational commitment, are closely associated with an increased desire to leave the organization. High-stress environments often foster feelings of helplessness and frustration, making employees view turnover as a viable escape route. Empirical studies strongly support this perspective, with Vika (2018) demonstrating a positive and significant effect of job stress on turnover

intention, indicating that prolonged exposure to stressors in the workplace can substantially increase employees' intent to resign.

Furthermore, workplace stressors such as role ambiguity, excessive workload, interpersonal conflicts, and lack of autonomy are often cited as primary contributors to job stress. When employees face these stressors without adequate support systems, their coping mechanisms are overwhelmed, leading to a cascade of negative emotions and cognitive dissonance about their role within the organization. Over time, this mental strain fosters disengagement and reduces motivation, further intensifying turnover intention. Additionally, Elfenso and Andani (2022) emphasize that employees experiencing persistent stress are significantly more inclined to seek employment opportunities elsewhere, as they perceive other organizations may provide a more supportive or less stressful environment (Lai et al., 2022).

However, the relationship between job stress and turnover intention is not linear and is influenced by a variety of contextual factors. Some studies suggest that stress does not always result in turnover intention. For instance, Syahrial and Sari (2023) argue that the impact of job stress can be mitigated by organizational interventions, such as supportive leadership, recognition of employee contributions, and accessible mental health resources. In organizations where employees feel valued and supported, job stress may be perceived as manageable, reducing its influence on turnover intention. Additionally, personal factors like resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies also play significant roles in moderating this relationship. For example, employees with strong problem-solving skills or robust social support networks may navigate workplace stress without developing a desire to leave (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022). Moreover, Rahmawati and Widyanoro (2023) highlight the possibility of a negative relationship between job stress and turnover intention, where mild levels of stress might act as a motivator, fostering engagement and problem-solving in high-performing individuals. This phenomenon suggests that not all stress is detrimental; the perception and impact of stress can vary widely among individuals based on their psychological makeup and work environment (Oruh et al., 2020).

The relationship between job stress and employee turnover intention is complex and influenced by multiple factors, including organizational culture, leadership style, employee resilience, and the availability of support systems. While high levels of unaddressed stress are a major driver of turnover, organizations can mitigate these effects by fostering a supportive environment, recognizing the importance of mental well-being, and implementing effective stress management strategies. This nuanced understanding underscores the importance of a tailored approach to addressing job stress and reducing turnover intention within diverse organizational contexts.

Factors Mediate or Moderate the Impact of Job Stress on Turnover Intention

The impact of job stress on turnover intention is significantly influenced by various factors that mediate or moderate the relationship, shaping the extent to which stress translates into employees' decisions to leave their jobs. One key mediating factor is job satisfaction, which often declines when employees experience high levels of stress, leading to increased turnover intentions. Conversely, employees who maintain satisfaction despite stress, often due to factors such as meaningful work or supportive colleagues, are less likely to leave. Similarly, organizational commitment acts as another mediator, with employees who feel a strong psychological attachment to their organization perceiving stress as a temporary challenge rather than a reason to quit. In contrast, low commitment levels exacerbate the negative effects of stress, making turnover a more likely outcome. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion and

disengagement, further mediates this relationship, as prolonged stress often leads to burnout, which strongly correlates with turnover intention (Lai et al., 2022).

In addition to these mediators, several moderating factors influence the strength and direction of the relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Perceived organizational support (POS) is particularly important, as employees who believe their organization values their well-being and contributions are better equipped to cope with stress. High levels of POS can buffer the negative effects of stress, creating a supportive environment where employees feel empowered and less inclined to leave. Leadership quality also plays a moderating role, with effective, empathetic leaders reducing the adverse effects of stress by providing clear communication, resources, and encouragement. Additionally, individual resilience and coping mechanisms moderate this relationship, as employees with strong problem-solving skills or robust emotional intelligence are more likely to manage stress constructively, reducing its impact on turnover intention (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022).

Finally, external factors such as labor market conditions and availability of alternative employment opportunities also play a moderating role. In environments where job opportunities are abundant, employees experiencing stress are more likely to consider leaving, while in less favorable markets, they may choose to endure stress due to limited alternatives. These mediating and moderating factors highlight the complexity of the relationship between job stress and turnover intention, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach to mitigate stress and retain talent within organizations (Hakro, Jhatial, & Chandio, 2022).

Organizations Effectively Support Employees to Mitigate the Negative Effects of Job Stress on Turnover Intention

Organizations play a critical role in mitigating the negative effects of job stress on turnover intention by fostering supportive environments and implementing targeted strategies to address employee well-being. One of the most effective approaches is to prioritize mental health support through programs such as counseling services, employee assistance programs (EAPs), and regular stress management workshops. These initiatives provide employees with the tools and resources they need to cope with stress effectively, reducing its impact on their job satisfaction and commitment (Lu et al., 2017).

Another key strategy is to cultivate a culture of open communication where employees feel comfortable discussing workplace challenges without fear of stigma or retribution. Managers and leaders should actively encourage feedback and create opportunities for employees to voice their concerns, ensuring that issues related to workload, deadlines, or interpersonal conflicts are addressed promptly. Leadership quality is particularly crucial in this context, as empathetic and supportive leaders can significantly alleviate stress by providing clear expectations, recognizing achievements, and offering assistance when needed (Salama et al., 2022).

Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks, also play a significant role in reducing stress. By accommodating employees' personal and professional needs, organizations can create a more balanced and less overwhelming work environment. Similarly, promoting a positive work-life balance through initiatives like designated rest areas, wellness programs, and regular breaks can help employees recharge and stay engaged.

Furthermore, providing opportunities for career development and growth can counteract stress-related turnover by enhancing employees' sense of purpose and satisfaction. Offering training programs,

mentorship, and clear pathways for advancement demonstrates the organization's investment in its employees, fostering loyalty and reducing the likelihood of turnover (Bhayo, Shah, & Chachar, 2017).

Lastly, recognizing and addressing systemic issues that contribute to stress, such as unclear job roles, excessive workloads, or lack of autonomy, is essential. Regular assessments of workplace conditions and employee surveys can help organizations identify stressors and implement changes to create a healthier, more supportive environment. By adopting a proactive and holistic approach, organizations can not only reduce the negative effects of job stress but also enhance employee retention and overall organizational performance (Hakro, Jhatial, & Chandio, 2022).

CONCLUSION

In conclusions, organizations play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative effects of job stress on turnover intention by creating a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. Strategies such as prioritizing mental health support, fostering open communication, and ensuring leadership empathy are essential in addressing employee stress effectively. Flexible work arrangements, initiatives to promote work-life balance, and opportunities for career development further contribute to reducing stress and enhancing employee satisfaction. Additionally, identifying and addressing systemic workplace stressors ensures a sustainable and healthy organizational culture. By adopting these measures, organizations not only reduce turnover intention but also foster employee loyalty, engagement, and overall productivity.

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